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**News Release
For immediate release**

VALLES CALDERA ANNOUNCES WINTER SCHEDULE

FREE DAYS AND CHRISTMAS TREE SALES HIGHLIGHT THE CALENDAR

Jemez Springs, N.M. Snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and sleigh rides highlight a full calendar of activities and events at the Valles Caldera National Preserve this winter. In addition, two free trail access days will be offered. Dogs are permitted on the K9 Trail and non-groomed areas. Winter hours are Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the Valle Grande Staging Area. The Preserve will be open every day except Christmas from December 20 through January 5. The preserve will also open for the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, January 20 and for Presidents' Day, February 17.

Skiing and snowshoeing open the season on December 6, weather permitting. Fees are \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors (62 years and older), and accompanied children 15 years of age and under are FREE. Adult and senior five-day passes are available for \$40. Reservations are not required but all must check in and depart from the Valle Grande Staging Area. A limited number of snowshoes are available for rent at \$15 for adults and \$10 for youth. Also, the Valle Grande Trail, Coyote Call Trail, and the surrounding area on the south side of State Highway 4 will remain open daily for hiking, skiing and snowshoeing free of charge.

Christmas Tree Sales begin the day after Thanksgiving on Friday, November 29, and will continue through December 23 at the Valle Grande Staging Area. You can cut your own tree for the permit cost of \$10.00. A map of the cutting area will be provided with your permit. High clearance vehicles are recommended, and chains or four wheel drive may also be necessary if snow conditions exist. If you prefer, you can simply purchase a pre-cut Christmas tree at the visitor's center for a fee ranging between \$20.00 and \$30.00.

Visitors can enjoy **free skiing and snowshoeing** during Public Appreciation Day, December 15 and Winter Trails Day January 12. Carpooling is recommended for these free events because parking is limited. Check in and check out at the Valle Grande Staging Area is required.

Four Saturday Moonlight Events dot the schedule on December 14, January 18, February 15 and March 15. The Moonlight Events run from 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. and are \$10 for adults and \$8 for seniors. Accompanied children 15 years of age and under are FREE. Visitors should be prepared for high elevation, winter mountain weather, and night conditions.

Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides will offer visitors an hour long excursion through the winter landscape. Rides are \$30 for adults, \$24 for seniors and youth, and free for kids five years of age and younger. Reservations are recommended to guarantee a seat, but drop-ins will be accommodated if there are seats available.

For details on events and reservations call 1-866-382-5537. Weather or other unforeseen circumstances may force cancellation of activities or closure of the preserve. Please call our telephone hotline for up to date information about activities, closings and more at (505) 469-6842.

The Valles Caldera Trust oversees the Valles Caldera National Preserve, formerly the privately owned "Baca Ranch." The 88,900 acre property is located in the Jemez Mountains in northern New Mexico. It was purchased by the federal government in 2000 under the Valles Caldera National Preservation Act. The property is known for its huge meadows, abundant wildlife, meandering stream, remarkable scenery and science based adaptive management. More information about the preserve can be found at www.vallescaldera.gov.

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